DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 211 110 IR 009 940

AUTHOR	Rowatt, Robert W.
TITLE	Slide Tape. A Guide to the Production of Slide-Tape Programmes.
INSTITUTION	Scottish Council for Educational Technology, Glasgow.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-86011-030-3
PUB DATE	80
NOTE	14p.
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Audiotape Recordings; Diagrams; Equipment Utilization; Photographs; *Production Techniques; *Projection Equipment; *Slides; Teaching Methods; *Transparencies

ABSTRACT

Step by step instructions are provided for planning and executing a slide tape program, as well as diagrams of equipment for presenting such programs. Guidelines are given for ways to: (1) define a program's purpose and objectives, (2) complete a storyboard, (3) produce slides from transparencies and photographed artwork, (4) write on slides, (5) prepare an audiotape, and (6) combine sound with slides. The final section of this guide offers suggestions for presenting the completed program. (MER)

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SLIDE TAPE

A GUIDE TO THE PRODUCTION OF SLIDE-TAPE PROGRAMMES

by

Robert W. Rowatt

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Designed by Ogilvie Design

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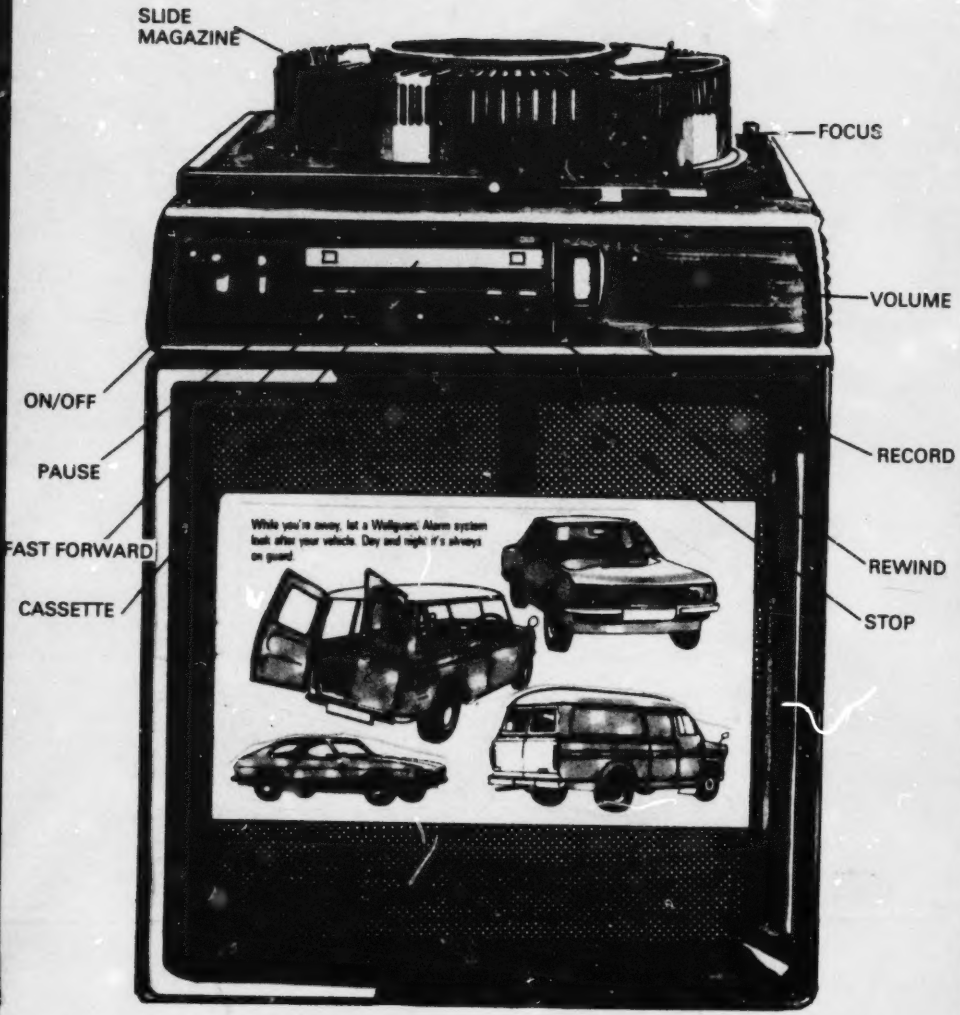
SLIDE MAGAZINE
FOCUS
VOLUME
ON/OFF
PAUSE
FAST FORWARD
CASSETTE
RECORD
REWIND
STOP
While you're away, let a Wellguard Alarm system look after your vehicle. Day and night it's always on guard

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1. WHAT IS SLIDE TAPE?

A slide/tape programme is an audio visual presentation which combines a set of projected transparencies with a matched soundtrack recorded on tape. In some programmes the tapes may also be used to initiate the slide changes.

2. PLANNING A SLIDE TAPE PROGRAMME

The first stage of planning a slide/tape programme is to decide on its purpose. This is most easily done by writing down a numbered list of the specific objectives which you would want your slide/tape programme to achieve. This list of objectives should enable you to decide whether the programme should be produced as a single unit or in separate parts. It is inadvisable to attempt to achieve too many objectives in one programme. This list of objectives may be used for reference during the production of the programme.

Once the programme is completed, the list of objectives should again be consulted to ensure that all of the points have been adequately covered.

Having defined the specific objective of the programme, the next stage is to decide on the specific content of the programme. This is most easily done using storyboard sheets.

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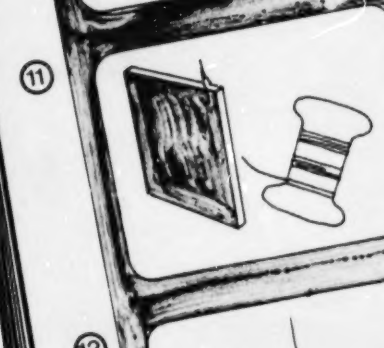
Here is a sample of a storyboard sheet from a slide/tape programme:

FRAME NO	VISION	SOUND
10		As the work has to be heated and then dropped into the polyethylene it must be suspended from a piece of wire so that it does not touch *anything* whilst hot and 'sticky'. This is easier if the article has a hole drilled in it, or, if part of it is not going to be coated.
11		If the whole article is to be coated, a very small hole can be drilled and thin fuse wire used to suspend the work. This can be neatly trimmed later on.
12		The work is then thoroughly cleaned in trichlorethylene to remove all the dirt, oil and grease.
13		and is then placed in an oven set at 300° celcius and left until thoroughly heated. The length of time will depe on the mass of the material. An ordinary domestic oven is quite suita

The left hand side of the storyboard sheet is used to prepare rough sketches of the visuals which will be included in the final programme while the right hand side is used to note the sounds which will occur at the same time as the visuals shown. The sounds may be music, sound effects or commentary. The storyboard sheet also serves to ensure that any particular visual does not remain on the screen too long. For example, if a commentary script for a particular visual requires more space to write than is allowed on the storyboard sheet then it is most likely that the visual will be on screen too long. In this case supplementary visuals (e.g. close-up of part of visual) may be required to cover the commentary.

As a general rule the visual element should be the dominant one.

As each of the objectives is considered, thought should be given to the way in which each objective may be achieved visually. The sound element should be an enhancement to these visuals.

Avoid stating in the script what is shown on the screen. This can generally be achieved by NEVER using phrases like "This slide shows . . .", "Here we see . . ." or "This is a picture of . . .". The audience can see for themselves!

Once the storyboard is complete, it should give a rough guide to the final duration of the programme. At this stage it is worthwhile reading through the complete storyboard and editing out anything which is repititious or irrelevant. This is a waste of time and money at a later stage in the production.

When the storyboard is completed to your satisfaction production of the slides and sound track can commence.

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3. SLIDE PRODUCTION

Slides produced in any of the following ways may be incorporated into a slide/tape programme.

(i) Transparencies

Many of the slides required for a slide/tape programme may be produced by simply photographing the subject using a camera which has been loaded with reversal film (sometimes called slide film). The most common size of transparency is 35mm. This is a measure of the width of the film and the actual picture size of 35mm transparency is 24mm x 36mm.

If process paid film is used it is returned from the processors as a set of transparencies already mounted in either cardboard or plastic mounts. It is worth remembering, however, that the processing of the film takes at least one week. Consequently, if a deadline date for presentation of the programme has been set before production is completed it is worth leaving time to allow disappointing photographs to be re-shot and processed.

While shooting 35mm photographs try to think of the format which will be required in the final shot. The two possible formats are

Horizontal

Vertical

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While it is acceptable to use both formats within a slide/tape programme care should be taken to avoid the visual image becoming distracting (e.g. horizontal and vertical formats alternating throughout the whole programme.) In general it is advisable to choose one format throughout the programme and include shots of the different format only occasionally or not at all.

The storyboard should act as a guide for shooting.

(ii) **Photographed Artwork**

On many occasions specially produced artwork is required as part of a slide/tape programme. This artwork can include diagrams, maps, collages, cartoons and captions. When commissioning or producing artwork the format of the final photograph should be considered and the artwork designed accordingly. Lettering for captions is easily and neatly produced using dry transfer lettering (e.g. Letraset) which is produced in a range of colours, sizes and typestyles. The lettering may be applied over any suitable background like coloured paper or card, coloured prints or photo montage. Black lettering on white paper or vice versa should be avoided as it tends to look dull beside other colour transparencies.

If titling is included in the artwork, it should be contained within the 'safe titling area' as shown.

Once produced the required artwork should be evenly illuminated either by the light from a window or with photographic lamps and then photographed in the normal way.

Write-on slides

(iii) Any transparent material (e.g. OHP acetate) may be cut to projection slide size and mounted in a frame. Lettering can then be applied directly using an OHP pen or "Chinagraph" pencil.

Coloured self-adhesive film or other OHP pens may be used to colour the background. This method is simple and cheap but may look a little untidy on projection.

Commercially produced "Ektagraphic" slides may be used. These consist of a matt surfaced piece of plastic mounted in a standard sized cardboard mount. The matt surface of the plastic will accept pencil or pen marks. Again, unless great care is taken in their production, slides of this type may look untidy when projected.

Black exposed processed film which is often sent back along with processed transparencies may be cut to size and mounted, emulsion (dull) side up in an ordinary slide frame. Lines, drawings or writing may be produced on this film by scratching through the emulsion with a sharp point such as a mounted needle. This produces white lines on a black background. Colour may be added to the lines if desired using overhead projector pens.

When all of the slides for the slide/tape programme have been produced they should be selected and numbered using the storyboard as a guide.

4. PRODUCING THE AUDIO TAPE

Before producing the final soundtrack, all of the required pieces of music and sound effects should be recorded on tape in the correct order. Many sound effects can be obtained from commercially produced sound effect records but remember that most recordings of music are covered by copyright. Permission to use a piece of music must be obtained BEFORE it is recorded.

Voice recordings should always be made using an external microphone as far away from the recorder as possible. This cuts down the machine noise which is picked up. In addition, the speaker should be placed as far away from external noises (e.g. banging doors) as possible. The corner of a curtained, carpeted room is usually sufficient to produce reasonable quality voice reproduction.

The music and sound effects may be mixed with the voice either directly on the recorder or simply by playing them from a second recorder close to the microphone. Wherever possible a direct lead should be used to transfer recordings from one machine to another.

While recording it is worthwhile noting where slide changes take place and leaving a pause, if appropriate.

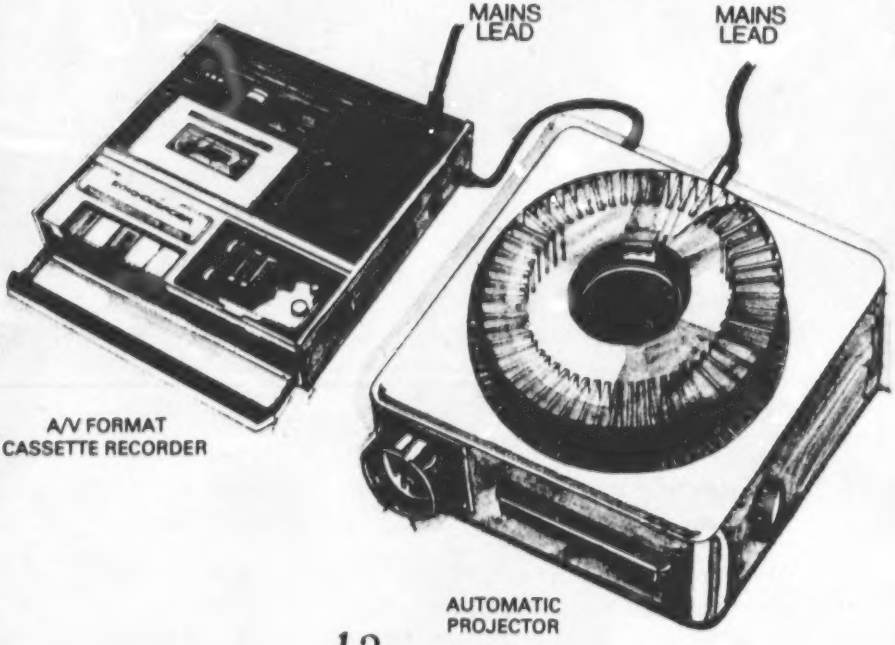
When the recording of the soundtrack is complete the slides should be projected as it is played to decide whether re-recording of any section of of the tape is necessary.

At this stage some slides may have to be removed or added to improve the flow of the programme.

5. MARRIAGE OF SOUND AND PICTURE

Using a special cassette recorder, "pulses" may be recorded on to the same tape as the soundtrack. These pulses will cause the slides to change automatically, when the recorder is linked to an automatic projector.

Using the special cassette recorder, the soundtrack is played and, each time a slide change is required, a pulse is recorded on tape. Once the whole tape has been pulsed it should be linked to the automatic projector and the whole programme viewed to ensure that the slide changes occur at the correct points.



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6. PRESENTING THE PROGRAMME

The equipment should be set up as shown on the diagram. It is advisable to start and end the programme with a blank slide so that the projector may be switched on before the presentation is due to commence. This means that the first pulse on the soundtrack should be used to change from the blank slide to the first slide of the programme.

The programme is run by simply pressing the play button on the special cassette recorder. Similarly, at the end of the programme, the last pulse on the soundtrack should cause the last slide in the programme to change to a blank.

If several programmes are being shown at the same viewing, then all the soundtracks should be recorded on to the same tape. A blank slide should be inserted between each programme. The audio tape should then be pulsed to match the programmes and the blanks.

If two automatic projectors are available, then it is possible to present the programmes without the screen blanking out between slide changes. This is achieved by using a special change-over unit which connects both automatic projectors together. The special cassette recorder with its controlling audio tape is then connected to the change-over unit.

In this set up, since the projectors operate alternately the slides for each programme have to be loaded into the magazine for each projector alternately. This set up also doubles the number of slides which may be projected without changing projector magazines.

If a programme is stopped part way through, it is always advisable to go back to the beginning of the programme and find the appropriate place on the audio tape otherwise a pulse may be missed and the programme would be out of synchronisation with the soundtrack.

With care and thought, slide/tape programmes should enable presenters to give a controlled audio visual presentation of their material.

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